

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

LARGE VESSEL WORKING GROUP

**September 30, 2003
Harvey Government Center, Key West**

In Attendance:

Panel

Anne McCarthy – Facilitator and Co-Chair, Lower Region Manager, FKNMS
Capt. Don Kincaid - Co-Chair, SAC, Stars and Stripes
Nancy Klingener, - Co-Chair, SAC, The Ocean Conservancy
Lt. Robert Kamphaus, - Co-Chair, Lower Region Assistant Manager, FKNMS

Speakers

Capt. Jim Scholl – U.S. Navy
Capt. James Watson – U.S. Coast Guard
Lt. Raymond Negrón – U.S. Coast Guard
Glenn Schuster – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Steve Collins – Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines
Suzanne Garrett – RSMAS, University of Miami
Chuck Fitzsimmons – Key West Bar Pilots Association
Raymond Archer – City of Key West

Working Group Members

Don DeMaria
Michael Bailey
Fran Decker
Richard Grathwohl
Peter Cone
Sandy Walters
Duncan Mathewson
Edward Lemieux
Jim Hudgens
Joseph Mujwit

Observers

Warren Johnson
Bob Nelson
Ed Barham
John Jones
Bill Mauldin
Dan Probert
Kelly Hinchey
Jessica Mazzola
Doug Bradshaw
Cara Buckley
Kelly Rankin

Elliot Baron
Nancy Brooking
Jim Vernon
Clarice Yentsch
Charles Yentsch
Frank Wiltse
Terte Alnes
Bob Brown
Phyllis LeConte
Norma Jean Sawyer-Atanda
John Olinzouk
DeeVon Quirolo
Julio Avel
Terry Wood
Staff
Cheva Heck
Lauri MacLaughlin
Fiona Wilmot

I. Introductions

Anne McCarthy, the new Lower Region Manager with the Sanctuary introduced herself and the panel and welcomed the Working Group and members of the public. She conveyed Superintendent Causey's apologies for absence and reminded those present that the goal of the Working Group is to focus on the environmental impacts of large vessels on marine resources. She introduced Captain Jim Scholl, the new Commanding Officer at the Naval Air Station in Key West who is overseeing the Key West Harbor and ship channel dredging project.

II. Navy Dredging Project – Captain Jim Scholl (NASKW)

Captain Scholl said that the new Navy requirement to operate larger vessels into Key West for training and maintenance purposes necessitates maintenance dredging of the harbor and ship channel to the original dredge depth of 34 feet. The \$36 million project will be handled through the Army Corps of Engineers and take approximately 18 months to complete. He noted that the platform to be deployed in the operation will cause minimal inconvenience to regular shipping traffic and that both sides of the Mole Pier will be dredged. Discussion followed concerning disposal of the sediment, which, under a revised plan described by Glenn Schuster of the Army Corps will be deposited at two sites. Coarse sand and rock will be dumped offshore at an EPA-designated flat, open site. Silty material will be taken to Navy-owned Fleming Key and contained within dykes to prevent run-off. There is no significant level of contamination in any of the sediments.

III. Coast Guard Operations – Lieutenant Raymond Negron (USCG, Miami)

Lieutenant Negron described the area covered by the Marine Safety Office (MSO) in Miami and the procedures used, specifically a boarding matrix, to prevent substandard ships from entering U.S. waters. He also outlined the passenger vessel program which

verifies that a vessel is in compliance with existing regulations. LT Negron detailed the federal regulations and conventions governing safety at sea as well as pollution. In the event of an oil spill there is a National Reporting Center which notifies the Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (1-800-424-8802). He outlined the penalties for marine violations and the authorities under which non-compliant vessels can be removed from U.S. waters. He was joined by Captain Jim Watson (MSO, Miami) for discussion which concerned regulations for Marine Sanitation Devices (MSD), the keeping of discharge logs on cruise ships and the fact that the United States is not a signatory to MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from ships). Captain Watson added that MSO Miami runs the Center of Excellence for cruise ship safety, security and environmental protection for the country. Further discussion concerned the future mandatory requirements for changing ballast water and maintaining records.

IV. Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines: operations, agreement with the State of Florida and discharge protocols – Steve Collins (RCCL)

Steve Collins, Regulatory Compliance Specialist with RCCL gave a PowerPoint presentation on waste stream procedures on cruise ships, including blackwater, gray water and bilge water as well as solids and recyclables. He emphasized the role of crew training and the important position of an Environmental Officer on each vessel. He noted that the goal at Royal Caribbean is to manage waste beyond compliance. Mr. Collins discussed waste water treatment and disposal, factoring in cost and state regulations in choice of treatment systems. He made the point that some vessels treat water to higher standards than some coastal communities in the United States and that Royal Caribbean and Carnival Cruise Lines have agreements with the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (RSMAS) to gather data on cruises throughout the Caribbean.

Mr. Collins described the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the International Council on Cruise Lines and Florida Department of Environmental Protection. This MOU lists specific treatment and handling methods for waste disposal to best protect the coastal environment at the highest possible standard and with the most stringent requirements.

Detailed discussion followed concerning conformity with standards in Alaska, air emissions, disposal of the concentrated waste from reverse osmosis and the lack of receptive facilities at U.S. ports for discharging waste, which would be obligatory if the U.S. were a signatory to MARPOL. Mr. Collins clarified that there are trade-offs between research and development of new treatment equipment and operating costs. He was joined by Joe Mujwit, Director of Environmental Compliance with Carnival Cruise Lines, in addressing the type of equipment used on vessels operating in Alaskan waters. Sludge concentration is an apparent problem with producing very clean water and there is a need for general consensus on effluent standards.

V. Tourism and Marine Resource Use – Suzanne Garrett (RSMAS)

Suzanne Garrett gave a PowerPoint presentation on the impacts of tourism on the environment and society using the Bahamas as a case study. She described the size and scope of the burgeoning cruise industry as a part of the larger tourism industry in the Caribbean. There is an increased emphasis on the ships and not the ports as destinations. She described infrastructure impacts, pollution, emissions, physical impacts of large numbers of passengers disembarking simultaneously, inadequacy of landfills on smaller islands to cope with waste disposal and incineration of solid waste, as well as oil spills and discharges.

Ms. Garrett turned to societal and economic impacts of the cruise line industry and noted that local communities are not necessarily the beneficiaries of tourist dollars. She observed that fishing and tourism are also not always compatible uses and that there are sometimes conflicts between natural resources and tourists. She concluded that although the cruise industry has voluntarily undertaken a number of environmentally sensitive measures that there is a need for more education and more research on the impacts of such large numbers of people on the environment. She added that MARPOL is more geared towards cargo ships and that there aren't many laws and regulations to address a small town that floats on the water. Discussion followed concerning the trend for building ever larger ships with greater passenger capacity, and regulations governing waste water disposal in California.

VI. Key West Bar Pilots Association – Chuck Fitzsimmons

Chuck Fitzsimmons described operating guidelines and procedures under Florida statutes and how the pilots try to minimize turbidity. The use of force of the ship's main engines stirs up most turbidity, but due to the size and depth of Key West Harbor, bow and stern thrusters are of limited use and tugboats of sufficient size to maneuver larger vessels would themselves generate as much turbidity. Mallory Dock is the most problematic in terms of turbidity. Mr. Fitzsimmons indicated that dredging the harbor will help to alleviate this problem. Discussion concerned maneuverability and the narrowness of Cut B.

VII. Public Comment

H.T. Pontin asked why, since dredging is against the law and there is talk of dredging Key West Harbor, ordinary citizens are not allowed to dredge out the fill that is near the rest of the Keys within the tide range.

H.T. Pontin asked by what treaty the State gained the submerged land to give to the Sanctuary. Discussion followed concerning jurisdiction over submerged lands.

VIII. City of Key West Harbor Operations – Raymond Archer

Raymond Archer said that the City provides cooperation and coordination between the cruise ship industry and the merchants of Key West through providing security and collecting fees. He described the reservation process, and the allocation of vessels to disembarkation points. He noted that it is the cruise industry that determines where the passengers will be taken when they leave the vessel. He said that each cruise ship visitor will be charged an additional \$2 and that the City Commission is looking at a security

surcharge to defray the extra security costs. Mr. Archer said that the cruise ship lines are cooperating on such matters as loud announcements at night, no discharges or incineration whilst in port, and vacating Mallory Dock during the sunset celebration. They are discussing a possible mandatory pumpout while visiting Key West. He also noted the City's cooperation with the Navy over the use of pier space. Discussion concerned monitoring for discharges, fiscal benefits to unincorporated Monroe County and the possibility of the City dredging Mallory Dock in addition to the Navy's dredging. Mr. Archer observed that Key West is more environmentally sensitive now than it was in the days of unfettered dumping in the past. Further discussion concerned the City's business decision not to charge for tendering passengers from vessels anchored out.. Scheduling of Navy ships to Mallory Dock is possible with the installation of sewer pump hook-up and other utilities and Open House events for the public there, even during sunset celebrations, is beneficial.

IX. Closing Comments

Anne McCarthy thanked all the participants. Discussion followed concerning future outreach opportunities for the citizens of Key West to learn more about the Navy dredging project. The next meeting is early in the new year.

X. Adjourned